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ANNUAL MESSAGE

OF

THE EXECUTIVE,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND.

December Session, 1844.

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House

M E S S A G E .

Gentlemen of the Senate,

And of the House of Delegates :

It is to be expected, that the representatives of the people of Maryland will look to the usual annual communication of the Executive, for a general and candid expose of the condition of the State. There is no subject in which our constituents can be more deeply interested. They may and do look with pride and pleasure up on the occurrences daily demonstrating the permanence and excellence of those forms of Government established in the several States of the confederacy, and cannot but exult in the proofs thus afforded, by the constitutional action of the General and State Governments, that no political institutions, which have been heretofore devised by human wisdom, can be compared with those under which we live, in their adaptation to the great end and object of all government—the security of private property, the protection of personal rights, the redress of personal wrongs, and the advancement of civil and religious liberty. But while contemplating the prosperous and happy condition of many of our sister States, and rejoicing in the glorious destiny of our Union, which the past prophecies for the future, our constituents must feel a deep anxiety in relation to the internal affairs of our own State ; and have a right to expect, in the annual Message of the Governor to the Legislature, a faithful disclosure, to the best of his judgment, of the causes of our public difficulties, with a recommendation of such measures as may, in his opinion, be best calculated, in whole or in part, to remove them.

Nothing has contributed more to the embarrassments which we have to encounter, than the too absorbing character of our Presidential elections. At the time the two great parties of the country were organized during the first term of General Jackson's administration, on great conflicting measures of public policy, Maryland was free from debt, and there was no just reason to apprehend that any contingency could arise, which would endanger the fair fame and honor of our State. From that time to the present, our constituents have been engaged in an animated, and unceasing contest for the mastery in regard to the Tariff, the Currency, and the disposition of the Public Lands,—subjects which appertain pro-

perly, and exclusively to the General Government. Engrossed by these absorbing subjects, the people of Maryland permitted the management of the most important of their own internal concerns to glide imperceptibly into the direction of a few experimenting, and speculating individuals, whose zeal and enthusiasm, directed no doubt to a commendable object, have led to all the public evils of which our people justly complain. It is to be hoped that the leading cause of our perplexities will now, for a season sufficiently long to enable the representatives of the people to devise and apply the proper remedies, cease to influence the public mind, and distract the public councils. A Presidential contest of unusual animation has just terminated. Before we are drawn into the vortex of another, there is a breathing time within which, by a cordial, harmonious and energetic co-operation of all those to whom the honor of our State is dear, measures may be devised to redeem the public credit, and do ample justice to the public creditor. To accomplish an object so desirable, however, I am deeply convinced that it will be necessary for all in authority carefully and finally to avoid those things which are merely ideal, speculative, or problematical, and pursue steadily those which are real, substantial and true.

In former Messages of the Executive, the extent of our financial embarrassments was disclosed, and the total insufficiency of our revenue laws demonstrated. In my last Message it became my duty to announce to the Legislature the signal failure of all the financial measures adopted by their predecessors, to accomplish the purposes for which they were devised. The Legislature, with a patriotic determination to arrest the downward tendency of the public credit, enacted various laws at the last session, supposed at the time to be adequate to the object of their enactment. It is my unpleasant duty to inform you that the measures referred to are wholly insufficient for the intended purpose. The whole revenue system of the State, designed to provide for the payment of the interest on the public bond debt, so far from realizing the expectations of its authors, serves but little other purpose than to disappoint and tantalize, both the tax-payer and the creditor.

The interest in arrear on the 1st December, 1842, was \$859,656; on the 1st of December, 1843, it was \$1,171,872.97, and on the first of December, 1844, it amounted to \$1,450,961.51—This progressive increase of charges against the Treasury ought surely to be arrested. To do this effectually, the errors of past legislation must be studiously avoided. Those who are charged with the duty of providing ways and means to replenish an exhausted Treasury, must come from the ideal into the real world.—Their measures, instead of being founded on sanguine expectations, and fanciful estimates, must be based on well ascertained facts. To make this very clear, we need only to pass, respectfully, in review some of the measures to which I have adverted, and note the result.

After the passage of the tax law of March session, 1841, and

when the assessed value of the property of the State subject to its provisions had been ascertained, the Treasurer of the State, with a prudent foresight and manly frankness that did him honor, informed the Legislature that a large increase of the rate of the direct tax was indispensable. The Legislature, not acting in conformity with that suggestion, entered into the field of speculation and uncertainty. It was assumed that the act of March session, 1841, and its supplement at December session following, imposing a tax for the first year of twenty, and for the three next years twenty-five cents in the hundred dollars on the assessed value of the real and personal property of the State, would bring into the Treasury, for the four years ending on the first of December last, \$1,818,256.57, while it appears that the whole amount received from that source within that period is but \$985,155.17.

In aid of these estimated incomes, other laws were enacted expected to bring into the Treasury in the course of each fiscal year, \$200,000. These laws have been in force during three fiscal years, and, instead of realizing the expectations of their authors, by contributing to the demands upon the Treasury, the sum of \$600,000, have added only \$15,297.95 to the incomes of the State.

At December session, 1843, the highly qualified officer then having charge of the Treasury, in the spirit of fidelity and frankness manifested by his predecessor, declared to the Legislature that an increase of the rate of taxation then existing was absolutely necessary for the redemption of the faith of the State, and the restoration of public credit. These prudent admonitions were again disregarded. The most fallacious calculations and estimates as to the probable receipts of the Treasury for the year just closed, were relied upon. To guard against further errors of that character, and to demonstrate the necessity that exists for decisive, energetic measures, it may not be out of place to present some few ascertained facts, illustrative of the errors of these last legislative calculations.

Notwithstanding the experience of the past, the Committee of Ways and Means, the proper organ of the House of Delegates on the subject, at the last session, estimated the probable receipts under existing revenue laws, for the year 1844, exclusive of the direct taxes due for 1841 and '42, at \$490,000. The entire amount actually paid in was \$272,145.20.

The several revenue laws passed at December session, 1841, imposing taxes on incomes, on brokers, silver plate, watches and ground rents, added to the interest expected from the Baltimore and Susquehanna Rail Road, and the Susquehanna and Tide Water Canal Companies, would, it was confidently said, add to the resources of the past year \$145,000. From these sources the whole income received is but \$32,732.95.

These defalcations in the revenue are to be imputed in a great degree to the palpable insufficiency of the whole taxes levied, even if punctually paid. As long as our tax laws have this obvious aspect, we may expect a large portion of the public dues will be

withheld, in the belief that the attempt to pay the public debt will at no distant day, be abandoned.

When the direct tax was levied, the property of the State was estimated at three hundred millions of dollars. If this estimate had been correct, the rate of tax then imposed would have been sufficient. When the actual value of the property was ascertained to be less than two hundred millions, there was no alternative for those who intended to pay the interest on the public debt by taxation, but to increase the rate of the levy from twenty to thirty cents on the hundred dollars, thus to secure an income from the ascertained value of the property of the State, equal to that intended to be collected upon its estimated value. Instead of so doing, the Legislature undertook to rely upon other sources of revenue, that should at all times be regarded only as the means to supply those deficiencies in the regular annual income from the direct tax, necessarily arising from delays of payment, insolvencies, and other causes unforeseen and inevitable.

Another fatal error was committed in failing to enforce the laws against the first delinquents. Forbearance and indulgence towards those, engendered in the public mind a doubt as to the existence of a fixed and steady purpose to maintain inviolate the public faith. In this state of things others were encouraged to follow the example of the delinquents; and now, instead of three we have seven counties within whose boundaries the tax laws are not all enforced.

Repeated refusals of the Legislature to authorise an exchange of the Bank Stocks of the State, for evidences of interest in arrear, have had a deleterious influence. The stocks can, it is confidently believed, be exchanged readily for an amount of coupons and certificates of interest, largely beyond their value in money. When so favorable an opportunity is presented to realize for a portion of the public property more than its value, without an apparent effort to profit by it, it would be strange if very many persons did not entertain doubts, and misgivings, as to the intention of the State to redeem the faith which she had pledged for the ultimate discharge of the public debt. Communities, like individuals, may by imprudence, or erroneous calculations, become involved in pecuniary embarrassments, without necessarily incurring dishonor; but it is not readily perceived how either the one, or the other, having no intention to defraud, can withhold property from suffering creditors, willing to take it in liquidation of their just claims, at a higher price than it will command in market.

The laws of last session empowering the Governor, in certain contingencies, to commission officers for the enforcement of the tax laws, have been found altogether incapable of correcting the evil they were intended to remedy. No one in the defaulting counties, it appears, is willing to encounter the odium of becoming the collector of the tax levied to pay the interest on our internal improvement debt. These laws, themselves, contain provisions calculated to frustrate the principal design of their enactment. In the power

conferred upon the Treasurer to appoint agents with authority to receive voluntary payments of taxes, there is an inducement to every citizen of the delinquent counties, to decline the acceptance of a commission constituting him a collector. The collector, when qualified as such, would be subject to a law requiring him, under certain penalties, to enforce the payment of the public dues; while the agent of the Treasurer is only to accept such contributions to the Treasury as are voluntarily tendered. It will readily be perceived, therefore, that it would be difficult to find one willing, or desirous, to undertake the execution of obnoxious laws, when the Legislature itself seemed to anticipate a refusal to do so, and had actually provided an alternative, which appeared to be applicable to such a contingency. These antagonist provisions being embodied in the same law, have, it is believed, contributed to the results just adverted to. No one can be prevailed upon to accept a commission as collector in the defaulting counties, and the Treasurer has appointed agents in those counties under the authority of the law. From that officer the Senate and House will be informed of the amount received from his agents. When that information is communicated, an opportunity will be afforded (two modes of collection having been tested,) to select that which is most easy of execution, and best calculated to consummate the purposes of the revenue laws. Whatever may be the decision of the Legislature on this point, the same mode of collection should undoubtedly be adopted throughout the State. It is not just to have compulsory and summary collections in some counties, and voluntary, or procrastinated payments in others.

By the eighth section of chapter 269, of an act passed at December session, 1842, the Governor was directed, if in his judgment the interest of the State required it, to order suit to be instituted on the bond of every collector who failed to pay into the Treasury, the amount of taxes collected by him, on the day appointed for that purpose. In the execution of this duty, the bonds of collectors who had failed to pay the instalment due to the Treasury on the 1st of June, 1843, were put in suit; and in my annual message at the last session, the Senate and House were respectfully informed, that suits would be instituted for the recovery of the instalments due on the 1st of September of the same year, unless otherwise directed by the Legislature. The subject was taken into consideration, and by resolution No. 4, of that session, it was declared to be the sense of the General Assembly, that suits ought not to be instituted, as proposed, before the 1st of June last. Before the close of the same session, a law was passed which is considered as superseding the discretionary authority which had been vested in the Governor.

By a provision in the eighth section of an act passed at December session 1843, chap. 208, it is made the duty of the proper officers, in those counties, Howard District, or the city of Baltimore, where there may be no collector, to place annually in the hands of the Deputy of the Attorney General for such county, district, or

city, a list of all persons who may be in arrear for taxes more than one year, and the amount due from each ; whereupon the Deputy of the Attorney General, is instructed to obtain, by summary process before the county court, judgment against all persons thus in arrear, upon which execution is to issue to the Sheriff, whose duty it is, without delay, to pay over the money collected upon such executions, to the Treasurer, and on failure to do so, his bond shall be put in suit. Regarding this as an act dispensing with the requirement upon the Governor to institute suits as before mentioned, and seeing that it is applicable to all the counties in the State, I have not thought it advisable to exercise the discretion, conferred on me by the law and resolution above referred to: It may, however, be as well for you to inquire, to what extent this act can be conveniently executed. It proposes to put under execution at one and the same time, so large an amount of property, as to make it doubtful whether purchasers could be obtained for it on terms not absolutely ruinous to the interests of those unfortunately indebted. In the present state of popular feeling, when a spirit of insubordination to the tax laws is openly manifested in more than one-third of the counties, we may well question the propriety of any measure which might furnish to the disaffected, even plausible excuse for further combinations to resist or evade their faithful execution.

A cause more predominant than any yet enumerated has, in my opinion, exercised a powerful influence in suspending the healthy and beneficial operations of the revenue system of the State. Fallacious expectations have been, for years, generally and eagerly cherished, of further distributions to the State from the Treasury of the General Government. Under a firm conviction that these delusive expectations could not be realized, the probable disappointment of all who entertained them was adverted to in my first annual Message. In recurring to the subject now there is no occasion for indulging in conjectures. What then admitted of discussion may now be treated as a question adjudicated. The Presidential canvass with which the whole country has been so much engrossed is now over. The well known opinions of the President and Vice President elect, forbid prudent men to calculate upon the payment of our public debt, out of the resources of the United States. Besides, if there was no veto power in the path of those who seek, for State purposes, a part of the legitimate income of the General Government, there are great national objects to be gained by leaving all those incomes where the Constitution has placed them, to be appropriated to the common defence and general welfare. The report of the Secretary of the Treasury states the debt of the confederacy on the first of July to be \$24,748,188.23. That debt is to be liquidated. We learn from the same report that the surplus in the general Treasury at the same date was \$7,857,379.64. The duties on foreign commerce from which this surplus arises are to be reduced. Although a majority should think otherwise, the minority of the people of the United States have a constitutional right to insist upon a repeal of all taxes

levied by Congress, when no longer needed for the administration of the General Government. Those who enact revenue laws for the Union cannot, with justice, consider the separate interests, or apparent necessities of the several States. The minority in the confederacy have a right to be protected from the influence of any such considerations. The passage of laws, by a majority, even of the representatives of the people, which should be intended to produce a surplus of revenue to be applied to discharge the debts which the States brought upon themselves, would be a palpable violation of the first principles of the Constitution, and a tyrannical exercise of ungranted power. It will not be denied, that an express grant of such a power would have led to the rejection of the Federal Constitution, when it was submitted to the States for adoption. An attempt to exercise it without such grant would be productive, immediately, of consequences that no good citizen could desire to witness. Our Union, it cannot be too often repeated, was founded on compromises of conflicting local interests. It must be preserved by a faithful adherence to the same governing principles. Where a surplus of revenue had incidentally accumulated in the general Treasury, without direct violence to the rules of interpretation by which the meaning of the Federal Constitution is to be ascertained, some contrariety of opinions existed as to the mode in which the money thus brought into the Treasury was to be put into circulation. But there was then an avowed concurrence of opinion as to the duties of those who had enacted the laws occasioning such accumulations,—to reduce or repeal all taxes not clearly necessary for the legitimate and economical exercise of the constitutional authority under which they were established. These views and opinions may not be now very acceptable to a people heavily burthened with taxes. They are expressed, notwithstanding, under a conviction of their perfect truth, with an earnest desire to remove forever from the minds of our constituents, hopes that cannot be, and ought not to be realized; and under a deep sense of obligation to the whole country, it being the duty of all in authority to co-operate in harmonizing, instead of combining to bring into further conflict, the antagonistic interests and institutions of the Union.

The law passed at December session, 1842, for the sale of the State's interest in the several internal improvement companies, remains a dead letter upon the statute book. No offer has been made which the Treasurer felt justified in accepting. In the enactment of this law, such violence is done to a preceding solemn engagement of the State, that there was probably no reference at the time, to previous legislation on the same subject. By the 64th section of the act of March session, 1841, chap. 23, a deliberate promise was made to keep at the Treasury an accurate account of the revenue paid by the city of Baltimore, Howard District, and the several counties, and to transfer to them respectively, an equivalent amount of the stock of the State in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, whenever that company is prepared to make a

dividend of *six per cent.* to its stockholders. The prudence and propriety of such an engagement may well be doubted; but the sacred obligation of the State to fulfil it, ought not to be questioned. Even in the absence of such an insuperable obstacle to the sale of one of the public works, the time has not arrived when such a purpose could be consummated, without sacrifices too serious to be encountered.

The last report of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Rail Road Company, which will be communicated, shews a gradual augmentation of their trade and transportation. During the last year there has been an increase in the number of passengers transported of 14,162, and in the quantity of produce and merchandise of 58,105,739 pounds. The amount of trade passing over the road during the year has been greater than at any former period, and exceeds by forty-five per cent., that of the year immediately preceding. The steady increase of the trade on the road between Baltimore and Pittsburg, may be learned from the fact, that the whole amount of transportation in 1839 was four thousand one hundred and five tons, and some pounds, and during the last year it increased to the amount of eighteen thousand six hundred and fifteen tons and some pounds. The amount paid into the Treasury during the past year by this company was \$20,000. This gradual augmentation of the means of the company, and of the amount of its annual contributions to the Treasury, encourages the hope that the day is not far distant when its contracts with the State will be faithfully complied with, and admonishes against a serious sacrifice of the State's interest in its stock.

The relations of the State to the Susquehanna and Tide Water Canal Company are not those of a stockholder. Governed by a laudable desire to encourage the enterprize of our commercial emporium, the State loaned to that company its bonds to the amount of one million of dollars. The annual interest thereon being at the rate of *five per cent.*, and payable in London, amounts to \$55,000. This company, during the past year, has paid into the Treasury only ten thousand dollars, and stands indebted in the sum of two hundred and two thousand dollars, for interest in arrear. There is reason to believe that the annual receipts at the Treasury, from this company are far short of its means of payment. The last annual report of the company is not before me. By their report of the year 1843, it appears that their receipts for that year were \$65,585.38, and that their entire expenditures for salaries, damages, repairs, incidental expenses, &c., were \$35,933.11, leaving a nett profit to the amount of more than \$39,000, which the company were under the clearest obligation to pay over to the State of Maryland. As the works of this company are completed, and in full operation, and the value of the State's interest therein may be readily ascertained, it is respectfully submitted to the better judgment of the Legislature, whether measures ought not to be taken to compel full payment of the annual interest due, and a speedy liquidation of the whole amount of the interest in arrear. The

financial condition of the State will not permit her to be generous. She has not the means to be just.

No material change has taken place within the year in the receipts from the Baltimore and Ohio, and Washington Branch rail roads, when compared with former years. The dividends on the five hundred thousand dollars of stock held in the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company, fall short of the interest payable on the bonds issued for its purchase. But the dividends, and capitation tax on the Washington Branch, added to the small dividends on the Main Stem of the road, exceed to a small amount the whole interest payable on the million of dollars in bonds issued by the State to pay for its stocks in the two works.

The capitation tax on the Washington Branch, received at the Treasury for the year ending 1st December, 1844, amounts to \$41,040.29. The same tax for the three preceding years averaged annually \$40,157.16. This average shews that the receipts are less than they ought to have been, when the peculiar causes operating to increase the travelling during the year, and the natural increase of our population, are taken into consideration. It is supposed that this failure to enlarge the income may be traced to the establishment of several lines of stages which run daily between Baltimore and Washington City, and convey passengers for a sum less than that which the rail road company is by its charter authorised to charge.

It will be remembered that the attention of the Legislature, at its last session, was invited to the alleged decrease of the State's income from the capitation tax, in consequence of the high charges on the road in comparison with the terms on which the Norfolk line of steam boats were carrying passengers on the Chesapeake Bay. The General Assembly did not then think proper to interpose by any modification of the charter of the rail road company. The whole subject is again, respectfully, submitted to your consideration.

During the recess, my attention has been directed to the eighth section of the act of December session 1832, chap. 175, which gives to the Governor, during the recess of the Legislature, the right to authorise the Board of Directors, having charge of the Washington Branch Rail Road, to reduce the fare for transporting passengers, below the two dollars and fifty cents fixed by the charter of the company. Believing that, under the circumstances, it would have been improper to exercise this discretionary power, the authority was not given to the Board. The charges for transporting passengers should be permanent, and regulated by law, and not regulated by the arbitrary discretion of any individual citizen, holding, for the time being, the office of Chief Magistrate. If the transportation of travellers from Baltimore to Washington city, is to be confined exclusively to the rail road, for the benefit of the State, and the stockholders of the company, it cannot, with propriety, be done by such temporary changes in charges, as will compel stage and steamboat companies to withdraw from compe-

tion, with a return to high charges after all competitors are expelled. The travelling public are seriously interested in this question, and have a right to expect from the State the establishment, permanently, of such a rate of fare as is reasonable, and will supersede just cause for a resort to other means of conveyance than those provided by the State, through the medium of the corporations, fostered by its patronage, and owing their existence to its laws.

Since June last no report has been received from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, furnishing information as to its present condition or future prospects. It is believed, however, that within that period no such material change has taken place in its affairs, as if communicated, would assist the Legislature in deciding finally—and it is most earnestly, but respectfully, urged upon the Senate and House to do so—what disposition shall be made of the very large interest of the State in that corporation. Further postponement and delay on this subject, cannot possibly be productive of good to any of the interests to be affected. For more than sixteen years the State has been concerned, with other parties, in the undertaking to make a Canal from tide water on the Potomac, to the coal fields and iron ore banks of Allegany. For five years past the work has made very little progress. During this last period the interest due to the State, and of which it has received no part, amounts in the aggregate to more than two millions of dollars. The corporation stands honestly indebted to the amount of more than one million of dollars to individuals, many of whom are in a state of extreme want and privation, caused by the unjust withholding of their hard earned wages. I submit whether considerations of public justice and private morality, do not require, at the hands of the representatives of the people, an early and just disposition of these claims.

If it shall appear that neither the credit of the State, nor of the corporation, can be made available, so as to progress at once, to the completion of the Canal, without ruinous sacrifices to the creditors of the company, would it not be advisable, now, to adopt decided measures to determine clearly the vested interests of Maryland in that company? When that has been done, by a foreclosure of the State's mortgages, the facilities for pledging our interest in the corporation, will be so far increased as probably to diminish to a great extent, if not entirely to supersede the pecuniary sacrifices, which have been heretofore considered necessary to ensure the completion of the Canal to Cumberland.

By the last report of the Directors of the Penitentiary, which will be laid before you, it will appear that valuable improvements have been introduced into the management of that institution.—Its nett revenue for the year 1843 was \$483.66. The entire production of the labor of the convicts, during the last year, was \$38,997.37, while the expenses of every description amounted to \$29,462.53, leaving a clear profit of \$9,534.84. The number of persons, now in confinement, is 280. The policy adopted by the

Directors, so to employ the convicts as to interfere as little as possible with the mechanical pursuits of our citizens, is highly praiseworthy. I will venture, however, to suggest to the Legislature, that there are considerations, affecting the future destiny of that unfortunate class of beings, who may be incarcerated for violations of the laws, not unworthy the serious attention of our wise and humane law-givers. Unless especial care be taken to teach the convicts such trade as may be pursued profitably in the country which is to become their home, having no honest means of support they will, we may fear, relapse into their vicious habits, and become a terror to the society of which they may become members.

The laws making provision for the education of the indigent blind, and deaf and dumb, impose the duty on the Governor to inform the Legislature, annually, what amount has been expended within the year for those objects. For the past year the sum of \$1,665.30 was expended for the education of the deaf and dumb; and \$1,406.00 for the education of the blind. The principal of the Pennsylvania institution for the education of the deaf and dumb, recommends that pupils of that character shall not be sent to that institution, until they shall have attained the age of 10 or 11 years, and shall not be withdrawn until they shall have had at least the benefit of six years tuition. If you concur in these opinions, an amendment of the laws on this interesting subject will, of course, be necessary.

The usual report has been received from the superintendent of the National Road. It will be laid before you. It appears, from the report, that the road is in excellent condition, and does credit to the officer having charge of its repairs.

A full and detailed report of the Joint Committee of the two Houses of the General Assembly, appointed under resolution No. 8, of December session 1840, has been made to the Governor in compliance with resolution No. 38 of the last session; from which it appears that the duties imposed upon the committee have been diligently and faithfully performed. This report will also be communicated.

The Congress of 1836, for the purpose of establishing an uniform standard of Weights and Measures throughout the United States, directed the secretary of the Treasury to have made and delivered to the Governor of each State in the Union, or such persons as he might appoint, a complete set of all the Weights and Measures; adopted as Standards, and to be used at the several Custom Houses. By resolution No. 54, of December session 1842, the Legislature of this State authorized and directed the Governor to have distributed to each of the several counties, one standard of the several kinds of Weights and Measures to be received from the United States. In compliance with this resolution, John H. Alexander, with whom this commendable, and most desirable measure originated, was appointed by me the Agent of the State, to receive the Standards from the United States, and have copies of them prepared for distribution to the several coun-

ties. The agent has received from the United States, standards of weights of fifty, twenty-five, ten, five, and one pound avoirdupois, and one pound troy; of measures of length, the yard; and of measures of capacity a half bushel, a half gallon, the half, the fourth, the eighth, and the sixteenth of a gallon. The measure of length is nearly completed, and will be ready for distribution during the present month. Some time must elapse before the copies of the other measures, and of the weights, can be prepared with that accuracy which is required, and will be doubtless attained.

That the proper temperature may be had to make the required experiments on the metal to be used in the construction of the whole series of these standards, two years may be required. That the several States might with more facility, and at less expense, have made copies of the standards to be distributed, Congress at December session 1837, directed the Secretary of the Treasury to have made, under the superintendence of Mr. Hassler, one standard balance for each State. These balances, it is expected will be distributed in the course of the present month, when the weights for this State will be commenced, and without delay, finally adjusted.

Judging from the mechanical execution of the measure of length, and the extreme accuracy which is sought to be attained in its finish, we may anticipate that these copies of the United States standards for Maryland, will in all respects be equal to the originals, and will do credit to the agent and the State. From the manner in which the agent has, so far executed his trust, it gives me pleasure to say that he is, in my judgement, eminently qualified to perform the duty for which he has been selected.

A protest has been received from Rhode Island against the interference of Congress with the Internal Government and Constitution of that State. Resolutions have been transmitted from several States, concerning slave representation in Congress, the annexation of Texas, the repudiation of the State debts, or their assumption by the General Government. These several communications will be submitted to your consideration.

The threats of a dissolution of the Union, uttered in several of these proceedings are, I know, altogether misplaced, if intended to influence your judgments on a great question of public policy. We have many instances in the history of the country, when language, equally intemperate, was used as to measures which are now universally approved of. Such impolitic and undignified proceedings, did not then deter, they will not now intimidate, those who have in charge the most important question of the day.

The purchase of Louisiana, although loudly denounced at the time, and declared to be a sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union, is now regarded by almost every man whose opinions are entitled to respect, as a measure of infinite advantage to the Union, and conferring lasting honor on the administration of that truly great man, under whose auspices it was accomplished. It is worth while, at this day, to advert to the history of the times when the

policy of annexing Louisiana was under discussion. We there witness another of those innumerable instances of which all history is full, wherein the passions, prejudices, and personal rivalries of those who direct the destinies of States, blind the judgment to the clearest proofs, that they are resisting measures of the most salutary tendencies for the people whose confidence they enjoy, and whose interests it is their duty to promote. Who, at this day, would consent to have the millions of human beings who are to make their homes on the broad lands drained by that great river, the Mississippi, and its tributaries, dependent upon treaty stipulations with a foreign power for the privilege of passing with the productions of those fertile fields out to the markets of the world? Yet forty years ago, wise men, patriotic men, even whole States, threatened to dissolve the Union unless the policy of annexing Louisiana was abandoned, with as much earnestness as they now resort to the same means of intimidation against the proposed introduction of Texas into the Confederacy. There was a stronger apology then than there is now for doubting the policy of enlarging our boundaries. The power of a mild government like ours, acting mainly upon the opinions, and but little, for political purposes, upon the persons of its citizens, had not then been illustrated. Experience and theory now combine to demonstrate, confines of our Confederacy of Republics may be placed at any distance from the centre that is not too remote for those temporarily entrusted with the management, or personally interested in the Legislative, Executive, or Judicial departments, to resort conveniently to the seat of the General Government. Tested by this principle, the extreme southern or western boundary of Texas is a much more convenient confine for the Confederacy now than were the northern boundaries of Maine or Wisconsin at the adoption of the Federal Constitution. In the mode of travelling sixty years ago, there were in a thousand miles, more impediments to be overcome by the traveller, than are presented, at this day, in a distance of three thousand miles, when the power of steam propels the boat over the surface of our lakes and rivers, and drives the car along our rail roads, at the rate of twenty miles an hour. We live in an age of progress. And we owe it to ourselves, and our posterity, not to impede, from unworthy motives, that advance to perfection in the science of Government, as in every other science, which daily experience proves to be attainable. What force of imagination could depict the miseries to which the people of the old world have been subjected, under received opinions as to Government, inculcated by their selfish and ambitious rulers. For many ages England, with a territorial surface less than that of Virginia, was divided into no less than seven paltry Governments, kept asunder, that their feeble Heptarchs might each have his court, his army and his civil list. For a much longer period England, Scotland and Ireland separated, were engaged in perpetual border wars, sweeping away their population, preventing the progress of civilization, and inflicting an untold amount of human misery. In fact, every page of the history of

Europe contains admonitions against the introduction, on the North American continent, of the systems of Government established there. In modern Europe there are, exclusive of Great Britain, eighteen Quasi Republics, Principalities, Kingdoms, or other forms of Government. The area over which these Governments have jurisdiction, exclusive of Russia, Sweden and Norway, is not so extensive as that portion of our own country lying east of the Rocky Mountains. It does not much exceed one million three hundred thousand square miles. The experiment which we have successfully made, clearly demonstrates that the territory bounded in part by the Bosphorus, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and the Ocean, is not so great but that a confederacy of representative republics could with safety and convenience have been organized within its boundaries. The whole population does not exceed one hundred and fifty millions. To contrast the benefits and advantage of this European system of divided governments, with that which proposes one confederacy of free States from the northern confines of Mexico to the lakes, it would be necessary to pass, in melancholy review, the history of the petty nations of Europe for many centuries, and to make an estimate of the millions of human lives sacrificed, and the amount of treasure squandered in those never ending, ever beginning wars, which stain the pages of that history, for no other purpose than the maintenance of national boundaries that should never have existed, or of dynasties on thrones that should never have been established. We may believe that under another, and a better system, these millions of human beings—fulfilling at an earlier day the designs of Providence—would have gone forth to people the whole earth; and these mountains of wasted treasure would have been used to erect the spires of institutions of religion, benevolence and learning, in all the dark corners of the globe.

The other objection most generally urged against annexation, has less merit than that arising from the extent of the territory of Texas, and its remoteness from the centre of our Union. It is embodied in the resolutions of Massachusetts and Connecticut. They present the fact of there being a portion of the African race, in slavery, under the laws of Texas, as an insuperable obstacle to the admission of that country into the Union. By the annexation of Texas, it is not intended to increase the number of persons in bondage. The laws of Texas now authorize the importation of slaves from Cuba, to which island they are brought annually from Africa, by the slave-traders. This policy, in half a century, will add millions to the very small number of her present slave population. Annexation extending, as it would, the laws of the United States over Texas, forbidding the importation of slaves from abroad, would arrest the further progress of that policy, and while it promises homes for a portion of the slaves of our own country, more appropriate than those they now have, it will relieve, to some extent, Africa from the horrors of a traffic condemned by nearly all the civilized world. When this may be so clearly seen, we shall

have grave cause to regret, if on account of this slave question, a great measure is to be rejected, designed and destined, to add to the resources of the whole country; to open an excellent market for the productions of the work shops of New England, and of the minerals, the pastures, and farming lands of the middle and western States; to extend, widely, our flourishing commerce; to enlarge the borders of religious, civil and political liberty; and to add, at no very distant day, millions of human beings to the number of those who now, in our favored land, enjoy in the highest degree, and have secured for their posterity, the blessings of living under the administration of the best forms of Government known amongst men.

The jealousy towards admission to the Union, of States recognizing the institution of slavery, too long cherished in those States deemed, in that respect, most fortunate, is altogether unworthy of enlightened statesmen, and should be by all patriots repudiated. Under our Constitution and laws, our slave population cannot be increased by importations from abroad. Thus restricted, this domestic institution must keep that section of the Union where it exists, represented by a minority of the members of Congress, and of the electors of President and Vice President. No matter how widely extended our territory, where slave labor is preferred, may become, its population must be sparse when compared with the other divisions of the confederacy. Emigrants from Great Britain, and from continental Europe, whence we receive much the greatest portion of our increasing population, naturally prefer to become citizens of those States where there are none other than free laborers. Our northern States send forth, every year, tides of emigrants seeking new homes in the west; and they also give the preference to communities where the white man, the red man, and the African, are alike free to choose their pursuits in life. This invariable direction of all the great tides of emigration, makes it more than probable that Texas, if admitted, will depend for citizens and cultivators of her millions of fertile acres, on the southern section of the Union, now much the most feeble, and, on that account, only serve to diffuse that portion of our fellow-citizens of whose power and numbers the northern States appear to be so jealous. In that event, a large majority in the Congress of the United States is to be chosen, always, by the people of those States where slavery has no existence. From the same source our chief magistrate, wielding the veto power, and with it prepared to check any legislation unacceptable to those by whom he is elected, is to derive all his authority. Armed with these conservative powers to protect themselves, and their domestic institutions, against all improper and unconstitutional interference from the Government of the Union, our northern States, we may hope, will cease to resist the consummation of a great measure under fears of a political preponderance, they have not the least cause to apprehend. No apology need be offered to the Senate and House of Delegates for these brief re-

flections, on a question in the decision of which our constituents are so deeply concerned.

About to retire to a private walk, I may be, on this occasion, indulged in the declaration, that every act of my public life has been dictated by the desire to be faithful to my constituents in every honest effort to promote the lasting honor, and permanent welfare of our State, in all its relations, Federal and Domestic. The sacrifices of private interest, and of personal feeling, which I have been compelled to make, are abundantly recompensed by deep emotions of gratified pride at the unwavering and uniform confidence with which, for many years, I have been sustained by my constituents, in the efforts, however feeble, which I have made to advance, to the best of my ability, the true interests of those who have confided to me high and important trusts.

In that retirement to which I go, I shall hail, with exultation, the evidences of wisdom and patriotism on the part of yourselves, and your successors, which will lift my native State into the rank which she has a right to occupy among her sisters of the Union; and by the honorable discharge of all her obligations, and the development of her resources, to secure to her, forever, in peace and in war, the blessing and the strength of liberty, happiness and glory.

FRANCIS THOMAS.

[Document B.]

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,

January 10, 1845.

Read and ordered to be printed.

R E P O R T

BY THE

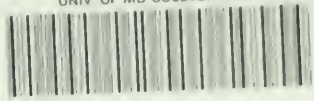
COMMITTEE OF CLAIMS,

UPON THE

Accounts of Dennis Claude, Treasurer of the W. Shore.

From the 11th Jan. 1844, to the 1st Dec. 1844.

UNIV OF MD COLLEGE PARK



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